

## **IN THE CLAIMS**

This listing of the claim will replace all prior versions and listings of claim in the present application.

### **Listing of Claims**

Claims 1-23 (canceled).

24. (currently amended) A digital contents distribution method according to ~~in accordance with claim 2235~~, further comprising the steps of:

generating, by a digitizing device, connected with said content database center via network, a digital content by digitizing an original content and transmitting, from said digitizing device to ~~a recognition~~ an acknowledgement device, a request for confirmation of content of said digital content;

executing, by said acknowledgement ~~recognition-device connected with said digitizing device via network~~, in response to said request, confirmation of said content of said digital content by determining whether said content of said digital content can be approved ~~has been generated with error~~ and transmitting, by said acknowledgement ~~recognition-device~~, a message indicating whether said content of said digital content is acknowledged or not ~~recognized~~ based on said determination; and

receiving, by said digitizing device, said message, and accumulating ~~aid-said~~ content of said digital content if said content of said digital content has been ~~recognized~~ acknowledged.

Claims 25-32 (canceled).

33. (previously presented) A digital contents distribution method, comprising the steps of:

(a) creating, by the content database device, a distribution schedule for transmitting digital contents and their goods information to each of the distribution management devices, with the digital contents being stored in the content database device;

(b) transmitting, by the content database device, the digital contents, their goods information and the distribution schedule from the content database device to each of the distribution management devices connected by a network to the content database device;

(c) storing, by each of the distribution management devices, the digital contents, their goods information and the distribution schedule in a storage of the particular distribution management device;

(d) transmitting, by each of the distribution management devices, the digital contents and their goods information thus stored to each of vending devices connected with the network according to the received distribution schedule;

(e) adding, by each of the vending devices, the digital contents and their goods information thus received to digital contents and their goods information already stored in a storage of the particular vending device;

(f) if a capacity of the storage of the vending device is insufficient to store the digital contents and their goods information thus received, removing, by the vending device, a part of the digital contents already stored from the storage, based on predetermined criteria, and then storing the digital contents thus received;

(g) presenting, by the customer, a desired digital content from among the goods information;

(h) if the digital content selected by the customer is not stored in the storage, sending, by the vending device, a request for distribution of the digital content selected by the customer to the content database center;

(i) receiving, by the content database center, the request sent from the vending device; and

(j) in response to the request sent from the vending device performing steps (a) through (f).

34. (previously presented) A digital control distribution method according to claim 33, further comprising the steps of:

(k) storing, by the distribution management device, the digital content received from the content database center in its own storage, the received digital content being the digital content selected by the customer;

(l) transmitting, by the distribution management device, the digital content selected by the customer from the distribution management device to the vending device;

(m) storing, by the vending device, the received digital content selected by the customer in its own storage;

(n) selling, by the vending device, the digital content selected by the customer to the customer; and

(o) recording, by the vending device, sales information as to sales of the digital content.

35. (new) A digital contents distribution method for distributing digital contents in a digital contents distribution system including a content database center which stores digital contents, a plurality of distribution management centers connected with said content database center via a network, each of said distribution management centers having a storage device, and a plurality of vending devices each of which is connected with one of said distribution management centers via a network to sell digital contents stored in said content database center, wherein a three-layer structure is formed by said content database center, said distribution management centers and said vending devices via the network, said digital contents distribution method comprising the steps of:

transmitting, by said content database center, digital contents to a vending device via a corresponding distribution management center connected with a particular vending device;

saving, by said corresponding distribution management center, the digital contents the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, when the digital contents are transmitted from said content database center to said particular vending device;

selecting, by said particular vending device, a digital content desired by a user in response to user input, said particular vending device being installed at a corresponding store of a plurality of stores selling digital contents;

if said selected digital content is not saved in said corresponding store, generating, by said particular vending device, a request for distribution of said selected digital content, and sending said request to said corresponding distribution management center;

if said selected digital content is saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said selected digital content to said particular vending device;

if said selected digital content is not saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said request to said content database center, receiving said selected digital content from said content database center, saving said selected digital content in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, and then sending said selected digital content to said particular vending device; and

selling, by said particular vending device at said corresponding store, said selected digital content to said user.

36. (new) A digital contents distribution system comprising:

a content database center which stores digital contents;

a plurality of distribution management centers connected with said content database center via a network, each of said distribution management centers having a storage device;

a plurality of vending devices each of which is connected with one of said distribution management centers via the network to sell digital contents stored in said content database center,

wherein a three-layer structure is formed by said content database center, said distribution management centers and said vending devices via the network,

wherein said content database center transmits digital contents to a particular vending device via a corresponding distribution management center connected with said particular vending device,

wherein said corresponding distribution management center saves the digital contents in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, when the digital contents are transmitted from said content database center to said particular vending device,

wherein said particular vending device selects a digital content desired by a user in response to user input, and said particular vending device is installed at a corresponding store of a plurality of stores selling digital contents,

wherein if said selected digital content is not saved in said corresponding store, said particular vending device generates a request for distribution of said selected digital content, and sends said request to said corresponding distribution management center,

wherein if said selected digital content is saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, said corresponding distribution management center sends said selected digital content to said particular vending device,

wherein if said selected digital content is not saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, said corresponding distribution management center sends said request to said content database center, receives said selected digital content from said content database center, saves said selected digital content in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, and then sends said selected digital content to said particular vending device, and

wherein said particular vending device at said corresponding store sells said selected digital content to said user.

37. (new) A storage medium storing a program for distributing digital contents in a digital contents distribution system including a content database center which stores digital contents, a plurality of distribution management centers connected with said content database center via a network, each of said distribution management centers having a storage device, and a plurality of vending devices each of which is connected with one of said distribution management centers via the network to sell digital contents stored in said content database center, wherein a three-layer structure is formed by said content database center, said distribution management centers and said vending devices via the network, wherein said program when executed causes said digital contents distribution system to perform the steps of:

transmitting, by said content database center, digital contents to a particular vending device via a corresponding distribution management center connected with said particular vending device;

saving, by said corresponding distribution management center, the digital contents in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, when the digital contents are transmitted from said content database center to said particular vending device;

selecting, by said particular vending device, a digital content desired by a user in response to user input, said particular vending device being installed at a corresponding store of a plurality of stores selling digital contents;

if said selected digital content is not saved in said corresponding store, generating, by said particular vending device, a request for distribution of said selected digital content, and sending said request to said corresponding distribution management center;

if said selected digital content is saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said selected digital content to said particular vending device,

if said selected digital content is not saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said request to said content database center, receiving said selected digital content from said content database center, saving said selected digital content in the storage device of said corresponding distribution



management center, and then sending said selected digital content to said particular vending device; and

selling, by said particular vending device at said corresponding store, said selected digital content to said user.

38. (new) A program file storing a program for distributing digital contents in a digital contents distribution system including a content database center which stores digital contents, a plurality of distribution management centers connected with said content database center via a network, each of said distribution management centers having a storage device, and a plurality of vending devices each of which is connected with one of said distribution management centers via the network to sell digital contents stored in said content database center, wherein a three-layer structure is formed by said content database center, said distribution management centers and said vending devices via the network, wherein said program when executed causes said digital contents distribution system to perform the steps of:

transmitting, by said content database center, digital contents to a particular vending device via a corresponding distribution management center connected with said particular vending device;

saving, by said corresponding distribution management center, the digital contents in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, when the digital contents are transmitted from said content database center to said particular vending device;

selecting, by said particular vending device, a digital content desired by a user in response to user input, said particular vending device being installed at a corresponding store of a plurality of stores selling digital contents;

if said selected digital content is not saved in said corresponding store, generating, by said particular vending device, a request for distribution of said selected digital content, and sending said request to said corresponding distribution management center;

if said selected digital content is saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said selected digital content to said particular vending device,

if said selected digital content is not saved in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, sending, by said corresponding distribution management center, said request to said content database center, receiving said selected digital content from said content database center, saving said selected digital content in the storage device of said corresponding distribution management center, and then sending said selected digital content to said particular vending device; and

selling, by said particular vending device at said corresponding store, said selected digital content to said user.